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Students Preparing, Launching Experiments at NASA Wallops

High school students from Maryland and Virginia will launch experiments on a NASA suborbital rocket and prepare experiments for flight on the Space Shuttle during a week-long program Aug. 2 – 6, 1999, at the Goddard Space Flight Center's Wallops Flight Facility, Wallops Island, Va.

The educational program called Flight Opportunity Week provides students hands-on experience in preparing and flying experiments in space.

The students participating in the suborbital rocket flight August 5 will be involved in the final vehicle preparations and the launch. In addition, participants will present preliminary data analysis to NASA officials at week's end.

Students preparing experiments for the Space Shuttle will work with NASA personnel in integrating their experiments for flight, view the suborbital rocket flight and participate in microgravity educational activities.

Four experiments will fly on a single-stage Orion suborbital sounding rocket approximately 25 miles (40 kilometers) altitude. The payload will impact in the Atlantic Ocean approximately 13 miles (21 kilometers) off the coast of Wallops Island. The U.S. Coast Guard, Chincoteague, Va., will recover the payload and the experiments will be returned to the students the same day of the launch.

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Two of the experiments were designed from Parkside High School, Salisbury, Md., and sponsored by NASA. One experiment will measure radiation in the atmosphere and the other is designed to provide data for measuring spin-rate of the rocket. A secondary experiment of various seeds will be flown for the Parkside students to use in programs with neighboring elementary schools.

The other two suborbital experiments were designed by students from Fort Defiance High School and Harrisonburg High School through a program with James Madison University, all of Harrisonburg, Va., and are sponsored by the Virginia Commercial Space Flight Authority, Norfolk, Va. The first experiment will use student-fabricated solar cells to measure solar variances and determine rocket roll rate. The second is designed to measure various flight parameters including pressure and acceleration.

Parkside students also will prepare and integrate three experiments for flight on a future Space Shuttle. These experiments include measuring radiation and electronic signals in space and flying a variety of plant seeds that will be used in programs with local elementary and middle school students.

Flight Opportunities Week is a joint effort between the Goddard Space Flight Center and the Offices of Human Resources and Education, Space Science and Space Flight at NASA Headquarters.

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